

STATE FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

Sept. 10, 2011

MINUTES

Present:	Maricopa	Apache	Greenlee	Santa Cruz
	Bruce Brannan	Peggy Kimball	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Tom Tellez
	John Fry			
	Nancy Harrell	Cochise	La Paz	Yavapai
	Florence Bellecy			
	Linda Smith	Patricia Schloss	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Karen Dansby
			Mohave	
		Coconino		Yuma
		<i>Vacant position</i>		Thelma Lundy
	Pima			
		Gila	Navajo	At-Large
	Richard Daidone			
	Lori Levitan	Jo Foti	Thelma Gray	Valerie VanAuker
	Paul Hanson			Joe Jacober
	Warren Trask			Gene Manring
	Jen Stephens-	Graham	Pinal	Dennis Ichikawa
	Cortum			
	Susan Ishmael	Ann Johnson		

Staff: Caroline Lauth-Owens, Bill Callahan, Linda Bednarek, Charles Gray, Bruce Johnson, Sharon Dalbey.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2011 meeting. Motion was seconded, motion passed unanimously.

II. INTRODUCTIONS:

Local Board members in attendance included Karen Morris, Sharon Wixon, JT Sterling, Nance Daley, Meri Friedman, Barbara Hays, Tina Sadler, and Andrea Nelson.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Executive Committee:

Jen Stephens-Cortum delivered the following report:

The number of children under review is at an all-time high.

The Executive Committee considered and granted two attendance waivers, one for Andres Carrillo in Yavapai County and one for Judy Barenkopf in Pinal County.

B. Advocacy Committee:

Florence Bellecy delivered the following report:

The Committee reviewed Finding 10 data collected on the 9,455 children who were reviewed in the first 6 months of 2011. Each element was broken down by service gaps and system problems. The Committee wishes to break the data down further by county and area. They would also like local boards to compile compelling stories related to Finding 10 issues. They would also like information provided to stakeholders like legislators, therefore the committee asks that the guidelines regarding contacting legislators be posted on the website. They would like to provide information to the public about the function and purpose of the FCRB, which would include data such as number of boards, volunteers, cases, etc. as well as problems observed in the system, such as case manager turnover and vacancy rates. Program Specialists could also distribute this to their boards.

C. Outreach Committee:

Linda Smith delivered the following report:

A huge recruitment push is being made; the Committee has assembled 200 application packets. Charlie and Sharon will provide packets to each board member. John Fry will speak to volunteers at the conclusion of the Sept. 30 Volunteer Conference to encourage recruitment. JT Sterling will be coming into the office to assist with follow-up calls to applicants. Charlie will contact AARP to register for their volunteer referral list. Linda will contact AZ Republic beat writers and the state retirees newsletter. JT Sterling will also reach out to a teacher's group.

The Tucson office had an article published that resulted in 18 observations this month. The Phoenix office has created 3 new boards in last 8 months, and is seeking to populate these board with new volunteers.

A small business card with information about how to apply was discussed. CASA has advertisements on movie screens but this is because they have councils

that do fundraising for them. We will explore creating small cards.

D. Continuing Education Committee:

Paul Hansen delivered the following report:

The website was discussed. It continues to be a work in progress and could benefit from the involvement of volunteers who will report errors, inaccuracies, and updates that are needed. The program reviews the website at the beginning of the month; members of the Committee will review it at the end of the month.

The e-packet was also discussed. A drop-dead date for sending out paper packets, perhaps July 2012, was discussed. That would give enough notice to those who cannot or choose not to use a home computer. To help with training, a Power Point presentation will be posted on the website to show how to use e-packets. We may also need to know which board members have broadband access and which ones have dial-up. Maricopa 03 is completely digital right now. Further digitization may be dependent on the kind of web server the AOC provides.

The Self-Evaluation form process is still pending and there is no update at this time.

The board distilled the list of proposed questions for the Youth Panel at the Sept. 30 conference down to 5 questions.

It is permissible to run e-packets in a public location such as a library. One may request to view them in a secure location. Most of public-access computers are programmed so that nothing on a disc may be downloaded, so confidentiality should not be an issue.

The Sept. 30 conference at the Pointe Hilton at Tapatio Cliffs is open to FCRB and CASA volunteers. It is funded by a federal grant exclusively for training through the Court Improvement Program. There are 350 people registered. Country music singer Jimmy Wayne, a former foster child, is on the agenda. Those who travel from a distance greater than 50 miles will be able to have a room at the hotel. However, mileage reimbursement is not available.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

Regarding outreach, John Fry mentioned that the best recruiters are already within the program. He was asked about providing the "Call to Action" at the end of the Volunteer Conference.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Warren Trask highly recommended a book by the former foster child who was featured in the movie "The Blind Side", Michael Oher.

VI. PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT:

Bill delivered the following report:

Statistical update: There are currently 9,584 children under active review statewide. 5,579 of those children are in Maricopa County. Maricopa 51 and 52 opened in August. We will be opening Maricopa 53 soon. While the numbers have increased in Maricopa County, they have decreased slightly in Pima County and we will be closing one Pima board in November.

Marsha Palmer, a supervisor in Phoenix, retired last month after 17 years with FCRB.

Two new MSW interns from ASU started in the Phoenix office on August 18th.

JOLTSaz will be replacing our DCATS database. We are going through the user requirements and having ongoing meetings with our IT department.

We have been participating in a survey with the National Foster Care Review Coalition regarding placement stability. This survey was originally conducted last year but some of the data collected was unreliable (surveys not filled out, or filled out only partially or incorrectly, etc.) so we decided to re-apply the survey for a 3 month period from July 1 through September 30th. The survey attempts to delve into the specific reasons why there are often so many moves during a child's time in foster care. When the data collection period ends we will work with other states to analyze the results and issue a report.

The Removal Review process has been undergoing scrutiny lately. When we last met in March, we had noticed a dearth of Removal Reviews being conducted. Volunteers were getting fewer and fewer calls, and our numbers showed that not every child entering care had a Removal Review conducted. We shared that information and our concerns with DES. Since then, we have seen a surge in Removal Reviews. The statute requires there be two members of the *local* FCRB, but occasionally county lines are blurred, for example when a volunteer in Maricopa County participates in a Yuma County Removal Review. We have had meetings with DES regarding the Removal Review process. The FCRB has recruited, trained, managed, and tracked data on Removal Review, but statutorily the process falls under DES, not FCRB. We will be working with DES to create a training on the role of the Removal Review volunteer.

John Fry said a newspaper article today showed a statewide backlog of 4,000 CPS investigations and 200 vacant case manager positions.

VII. DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Caroline delivered the following report:

We have hired an Administrative Assistant named Natalie Foster, who starts Sept. 20th.

Attorney Standards for representation of children were put into effect by Executive Order from the Chief Justice. There was a rule petition to incorporate the standards into court

rules; that petition was granted and they will now be in Juvenile Court rules effective January 2012.

There was a domestic violence symposium at ASU this week. Many Juvenile judges attended, and the likely result will be the creation of Court Teams to develop plans to address domestic violence issues that come to the court's attention.

The CASA Program has been working with the Gila River Indian Community to create its own CASA program.

There has been an ongoing committee for the past year and a half regarding Probate matters. The parents of disabled children who are *not* in the child welfare system must file a petition to remain as legal guardians when their child turns 18. There was a loophole that prevented them from filing that petition until the child turned 18, which resulted in an untenable period of legal uncertainty. The committee issued a report to the Arizona Judicial Council addressing these kinds of issues and other problems. One recommendation was to start a volunteer program to visit and check up on adults who are the subject of a guardianship within Probate Court. The Court is introducing legislation to commence such a program, which would be housed within the Dependent Children's Services Division. Although it wouldn't pertain specifically to children, the idea was that DCSD would be a natural landing place for such a program given the Division's history of strong advocacy provided by FCRB and CASA.

VIII. CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There were no public respondents.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 P.M. The next State Board meeting is March 3, 2012.